

Crisis Education Project Profile

March 2005

Project: Strengthening Education Programs For Orphan And Vulnerable Children (STEP-OVC)

Locations: Burundi - Ngozi province

Implementing Organization: CARE International in Burundi

Type of Programming: Basic Education and Capacity Building

Target group/beneficiaries: OVC, Parents and guardians of OVC, Teachers, headmasters and students, and Parents Committees

Stage: Reconstruction/transition

Environmental Context of the Program

SOCIAL: The armed conflict that has plagued Burundi since October 1993 has resulted in high numbers of displaced people, interrupting the regular and smooth provision of basic services including education. Some of the gains made towards achieving EFA goals at the beginning of the last decade have been lost. In some provinces like Ngozi, gross enrolment rates are as low as 43%. Girls' enrolment rates are usually lower than those of boys. The combined effects of war, high levels of poverty and HIV/AIDS have taken a heavy toll on vulnerable segments of the population especially children. Among these, girls are among the worst affected, facing the risk of not being sent to school whenever the foster family has a choice between a girl and a boy, the danger of sexual exploitation and other abuses, etc. Owing to its high population, Ngozi province needs to have at least 295 primary schools but only 126 were available in December 2002 with 1:80 teacher-student ratio.

CULTURAL/RELIGION: The Population of Burundi is estimated at 6.8 million (UN, 2003) of various ethnic groups. Hutus are 85% of the population; Tutsi 14%; and Twa 1.0%. Major languages include: Kirundi (official), French (official), and Swahili. Major religions are Christianity and indigenous beliefs. Inter-marriage takes place frequently between the Hutus and Tutsis. At 206 persons per sq. km., Burundi has the second-largest population density in Sub-Saharan Africa. Most people live on farms near areas of fertile volcanic soil.

ECONOMIC: The mainstay of the Burundian economy is agriculture, accounting for 41% of GDP in 2002. Agriculture supports more than 90% of the labor force, the majority of whom are subsistence farmers. Although Burundi is potentially self-sufficient in food production, the ongoing civil war, overpopulation, and soil erosion have contributed to the contraction of the subsistence economy by 30% in recent years. Large numbers of internally displaced persons have been unable to produce their own food and are dependent on international humanitarian assistance. Burundi is a net food importer, with food accounting for 9.4% of imports in 2002.

Political Relationships: Burundi's first democratically elected president was assassinated in October 1993 after only four months in office. Since then, some 200,000

Burundians have perished in widespread, often intense ethnic violence between Hutu and Tutsi factions. Hundreds of thousands have been internally displaced or have become refugees in neighboring countries. A new transitional government, inaugurated on 1 November 2001, was to be the first step toward holding national elections in three years. While the Government of Burundi signed a cease-fire agreement in December 2002 with three of Burundi's four Hutu rebel groups, implementation of the agreement has been problematic and one rebel group refuses to sign on, clouding prospects for a sustainable peace.

The United States has provided financial support for the peace process. U.S. bilateral aid with the exception of humanitarian assistance was ended following the 1996 coup. In view of progress in the peace talks, the United States and other international donors are reconsidering their policy of assistance.

Program Description

TARGET GROUP: The program specifically targets OVC children with a special focus on girls by providing early Childhood Development (ECD) programs for children aged 3-5 and providing alternative primary education programs for children aged 6-14.

MATERIAL/PHYSICAL RESOURCES: The project provides funding for ECD facilities constructed or rehabilitated by participating NGOs and CBOs. The project supplies books and teaching materials through participating NGOs and CBOs. Learning centers are equipped with clean water and ventilated toilets appropriate to gender needs.

FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES: The project is funded through private donations identified by CARE USA's Basic and Girls Education Unit. The project's main intervention is institutional development of participating local NGOs and CBOs to strengthen their technical, financial, and overall organizational capacities to initiate, expand and implement sustainable activities aimed at meeting OVC's right to education. Schoolteachers, administrators and PTAs receive training on child-centered teaching skills, and school management respectively.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: Community members participate in PLA exercises to discuss barriers and solutions to OVC's education especially the barriers related to girls resulting, in at least, 50% female beneficiaries. Households with OVC are mobilized for OVC's schooling and for building and rehabilitation of learning centers and classrooms.

TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM: To improve the teaching and learning environment, the program developed teacher training curriculum that focus on child-centered methodologies, gender appropriate methods and language, and basic psycho-social provision.

Programming Interventions: Impact and Effectiveness

ACCESS: To increase OVC's access to quality basic education the project mobilizes communities for the provision of educational opportunities to OVC affected by HIV/AIDS, especially girls.

This is done by strengthening the capacity (technical and managerial) of selected local partner organizations (NGO's and CBO's) to design appropriate interventions leading to OVC accessing quality basic education and improving retention in school / learning centers.

Children ages 3-5 receive ECD training at learning centers constructed or rehabilitated. Those of school age, 6-14, receiving alternative primary education in schools constructed or rehabilitated with community partnership. It is expected that provision of clean drinking water and properly ventilated toilets appropriate to gender needs will enhance access and retention of children in schools.

MANAGEMENT: The project is managed by a coordination committee that comprise CARE Project Manger and representatives of partner organizations and associations, parents and guardians of OVC, Education Provincial Office, Provincial Office of Education Inspection, Provincial Government and STEP-OVC staff.

QUALITY/OVERALL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: The STEP-OVC is a two-year pilot designed to provide CARE with important lessons on the interface between Education and HIV/AIDS programming. It utilizes Rights Based Approach (RBA) to focus on the provision of educational opportunities to OVC, especially girls, affected by HIV/AIDS by increasing their access and retention in schools and learning centers. It is implemented through partnership with two NGO's and three CBO's in the province of Ngozi. However, their capacities to organize and provide quality education to greater numbers of OVC are quite limited. So are their managerial capacities.

The project strategy strengthens the capacity of the local partner organizations (NGO's and CBO's) to design and implement appropriate interventions leading to OVC accessing quality basic education.

EQUIP1: Building Educational Quality through Classrooms, Schools, and

Communities is a multi-faceted program designed to raise the quality of classroom teaching and the level of student learning by effecting school-level changes. EQUIP1 serves all levels of education, from early childhood development for school readiness, to primary and secondary education, adult basic education, pre-vocational training, and the provision of life-skills. Activities range from teacher support in course content and instructional practices, to principal support for teacher performance, and community involvement for improving school management and infrastructure. EQUIP1 works with food for education issues and contributes to the provision of education and training in crisis and post-crisis environments.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is the lead organization responsible for implementing EQUIP1 and is joined by fourteen outstanding partners: Academy for Educational Development, Aga Khan Foundation USA, CARE, Discovery Channel Global Education Fund, Education Development Center, Howard University, International Reading Association, The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Juárez & Associates, Inc., Michigan State University, Save the Children, Inc., Sesame Workshop, University of Pittsburgh, and World Education, Inc..

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